Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
Chapter 20

Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter Newsletter of the Year Award

Between the Lines
Chapter 20
Rochester, New York
VVA 14th National Convention
Louisville, Kentucky
July 31, 2009

John Edward Crowley
Killed
Body Not Recovered
Repatriated in 2000
President’s Report
by Ken Moore

Well we are back from the 14th. Vietnam Veterans of America Convention in Louisville, KY and I would like to take this time to thank all those who attended as delegates and those family members that came to support them. It was truly another great convention - a time for some of us to not only do the business we were sent to do but also a time to visit with old and new friends from across the country. A total of 636 delegates came to the convention and that included a couple from Canada. New York was well represented this year with a record 68.

Opening day of the convention included all the normal business and part of that was some awards. I’m proud to say that Chapter 20 again for the 6th year running won best chapter newsletter for chapters over 199 members. Special thanks goes out to Kathy Gleason for her tireless efforts each month as editor putting it together. I would also like to thank all those who contribute to the BTL during the year. It was a proud moment for me to represent you by accepting the award. Let’s all contribute in future issues and shoot for number 7.

Wednesday convention hall opened at 9:00am with the start of some business. At noon I was honored to attend the AVVA luncheon where they announced that they now had been given the rights to have a service officers program and file claims on behalf of veterans for compensation. At 1:00pm I attended the Veterans Benefit Committee hearing where we talked about the resolutions that may be brought to the floor for a vote. At 2:30pm I attended the Health Care hearing and at 4:00pm I attended the Government affairs hearing.

Wednesday night at 7:00pm was the regional caucuses, a time when the candidates running for national office address the delegates from Region 2, run by our own VP, Fred Elliott. Pretty interesting hearing what they had to say they would do. For those elected we will need to keep our ears open to see if they follow through on what they said. Thursday the convention was in general session with more awards, some speeches and of course the business of resolutions. Time for a short lunch and back to the floor till 5:00pm, then 7:00pm brought us back to the Region 2 caucuses and more candidates. Friday was another day on the floor for busy and some speakers.

Saturday was an early day with the retiring of our colors and another convention in the bag. Saturday night banquet was great, food was wonderful and Guest speakers John Voight and Pat Sajak.

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I left out a lot of details for the simple fact the the other delegates will have their reports in this issue and I didn’t want you to be bored with redundant writing.

For me it was special riding to Louisville in my toaster with my good buddies, Ron Trovato and Ralph Pascale. A trip with Ron is always a trip, Just like a flashback to the 60s, playing my all time favorite Free Bird but this time drinking water and eating fried chicken. Lots of laughs and talk about old times and the things we did when we were young and crazy. A special thanks to all the members for letting me represent you and being part of the best bunch of veterans and family ever,

Thanks and God Bless you all.

One more thing with the chapter, we are helping a family that lost their home and everything inside. I have made arrangements with the thrift store to give them what they need they have small children and I think it the right thing for us to do helping our neighbors. Until next meeting stay safe

Ken Moore
President
Vietnam 1966-67
US Army Cavalry

Marching Unit
Ray Melens, Commander

On Aug. 21st and 23rd, members of the Marching and Honor Guard took part in the opening and closing ceremonies in Fairport for the Traveling Wall. More on this event will be in next month’s BTL.

The Marching Unit picnic took place on Saturday, Aug. 29th. Again there will be more in next month’s report. As of this writing neither event has occurred yet.

September is here now and members of the Honor Guard are preparing for their pilgrimage to Washington, DC and Arlington National Cemetery to conduct ceremonies for National POW/MIA Recognition Day. This day is always held on the third Friday of September. I will report more the trip in the November issue.

On Saturday Sept. 12th, the Marching Unit will be in Gaines, NY for their Bicentennial parade. Also later that day, at 7:30 P.M. there will be the annual POW/MIA candle-light vigil at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Highland Park. Please
try to attend and read names of those that still remain unaccounted for from the Vietnam War and help to draw awareness to this important issue.

There really isn’t too much to report this month. I mean there is but it seems none of it has taken place yet, thus making it hard to write about it.

The Honor Guard will meet before the membership meeting, upstairs at Ira. Any one interested in joining is invited to attend and take part.

Until next month…………AT EASE!!!!!!!

POW-MIA
Gail Bologna-Melens, Chairperson

At this time there are still 1,737 missing and unaccounted for personnel from the Vietnam War. Having just returned from VVA’s national convention which was held in Louisville, KY I found this article from the Rolling Thunder Newsletter. I will share it with you and a little background of why I found it so incredulous.

While in Louisville we were all treated to a screening of the movie Taking Chance starring Kevin Bacon. We had the honor of meeting Mike Strobl, retired Lt Col US Marine Corps who accompanied the body of LCpl Chance Phelps, a young Marine killed in Iraq. In the movie it stresses how at every stop and transfer you check the identification on the casket. Mike Strobl documented this journey that is now such a touching movie.

Well here is the article from Rolling Thunder Newsletter and Associated Press May 29, 2009.

A funeral procession for a soldier killed in Germany during WW II abruptly ended at a Kansas City, Kansas, cemetery when military officers realized they had the remains of the wrong soldier.

Patriot Guard motorcycle riders, Ft Leavenworth soldiers and local police held a grand procession Wednesday to escort home what they thought were the remains of Army Private Henry E “Rickey” Marquez. Marquez was killed in November 1944, but his body remained missing until a German citizen searching for war relics found his remains and identification tags two years ago.

His brother, John Marquez, said that when the procession reached the cemetery, military officials realized his brothers remains were still in Hawaii.

The remains in Kansas City belonged to another soldier.

Fort Leavenworth spokesman, George Marcocc, told the Associated Press on Thursday that it’s unclear whose remains were taken from the airport the previous day. He said that the body apparently was on its way to Iowa and that Kansas City was just a stopover.

In a news release Thursday, military officials said only that “casualty assistance personnel from Fort Leavenworth incorrectly received and escorted a set of remains that had arrived at Kansas City International airport.”

Marquez’s remains arrived in Kansas City on Thursday morning. The fort’s garrison commander expressed deep regrets to the Marquez family for any grief the mix-up caused.

Base officials are investigating the “communication gaps” that caused the military to accept the wrong remains, according to the news release.

I hope to see a great many of us at the Candlelight Vigil for our POW-MIs that we will hold on Saturday night, September 12 at 7:30pm at the Vietnam Memorial in Highland Park. We are doing this on the Saturday before National POW-MIA Recognition Day which is always held on the third Friday in September. The Honor Guard, myself and others will be at The Wall on that day laying a wreath and explaining to the gathered crowd that this is National POW-MIA Recognition Day and what we are doing. Please take the time on September 18 to REMEMBER all of our 1,737 POW’s and MIA’s. Also, September 27 is Gold Star Mothers Day please take a moment of time to REMEMBER them as well.

Legislation for Veterans
By Fred Elliott

Now that the folks in Albany have resolved their differences (for now, anyway) we can see some movement and some bills actually got passed.

A.1532, a bill to amend the executive law, to create a veteran speaker education program within the Division of Veterans’ Affairs. Specifically, the bill would require the Division of Veterans’ Affairs in consultation with the director of the New York State military museum and veterans resource center, to develop an informational pamphlet to be distributed to school districts which provides a general overview of the program and a listing of area veterans willing to speak to students regarding their military experience was passed by the Assembly and delivered to the Senate where it was referred to the Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs Committee.

The Assembly also passed A.5371, a bill to amend the executive law, to authorize the Division of Veterans’ Affairs to create a veteran speaker education program within the Division of Veterans’ Affairs in consultation with the director of the New York State military museum and veterans resource center, to develop an informational pamphlet to be distributed to school districts which provides a general overview of the program and a listing of area veterans willing to speak to students regarding their military experience was passed by the Assembly and delivered to the Senate where it was referred to the Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs Committee.

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Looking to start a small business? The Assembly passed A.7093, that would require the Division of Veterans...
Affairs to work with the NYS Small Business Development Center and the Office of Entrepreneurial Education to provide eligible veteran information regarding veteran-owned business opportunities. The Senate committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs has the bill under review now.

Cold War Veterans will appreciate A.7422 that was passed by the Assembly and Senate and sent to the Governor for his signature. The bill provides an opportunity for municipalities to choose to offer increased property tax exemptions for veterans pursuant to section 458-b of the real property tax law and to also allow such veterans who reside in cooperative apartments to benefit from property tax exemptions when they are tenant-stockholders of cooperative apartment corporations.

Passed by the Assembly and sent to the Senate where it was given to the Rules Committee for review, A.8296 will establish the NYS interagency coordinating council for service-disabled veterans, define the powers and duties of the council and require an annual report by the council to the Governor, the Temporary President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly. The Council will include ten agency heads or their designees from the following agencies: the director of the NYS Division of Veterans’ Affairs, who will also serve as chair of this council, the NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs, the Division of Housing & Community Renewal, the Offices of Mental Health, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, Aging and the Departments of Health, Labor, Education and Transportation. In addition to the agency representatives, the Council will include nine service-disabled veteran representatives appointed by the Governor and the State Legislature.

Bill number A.8737 was signed into law by the Governor after being passed by both the Assembly and Senate. This bill will allow the New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs to increase funding to local veterans service agencies only to the extent that funding is actually appropriated. This bill increases the "caps" on funding for local veterans service agencies but does not mandate increase funding.

The State Senate passed and sent to the Assembly for review S.2440, a bill that exempts from real property taxation real property owned by a person certified to receive a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs disability pension pursuant to 38 USC 1521; allows an award letter from the U.S. DVA to be submitted as proof of disability.

AVVA Recognized as a National Veterans Service Organization by Nancy Switzer

On July 17, 2009, at 3:30 p.m., Secretary Shinseki, took swift and positive action on our application to become a Veterans Service Organization. It was a long process, which took a whole year to prepare and I thank David Houppert, Vietnam Veterans of America’s (VVA) National Benefits Executive Director, for assisting me in this application. The Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) is now recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a national organization whose members will be accredited to assist in the preparation and process of benefits claims for veterans and their families. AVVA is the first such group of associates to be so recognized, and the first national group to be so recognized in some years.

This recognition will allow our organization to directly represent and assist America’s sons and daughters who have donned the uniform in defense of our country, as well as their families. We did this because there simply are not enough accredited service officers to assist our veterans. Too many veterans have to wait months or even longer, before they can even have an initial meeting with a service representative. AVVA believes we can help close this gap to ensure that our veterans and their families receive the assistance they are entitled to.

Elaine Simmons, the National President of AVVA, accepted with honor a certificate at the National Leadership Conference.

VVA General Election Results

<table>
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<th>Votes</th>
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<td>1. Four, Marsha</td>
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<td>2. Meeks, Bill</td>
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<td>3. Welch, Patrick</td>
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<td>4. Stenvold, Dan</td>
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<td>6. Burke, Thomas</td>
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<td>7. Yamamoto, Jerry</td>
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<td>8. Wilson, Sandy</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Bessigano, Pat</td>
<td>370</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. DeLong, Richard</td>
<td>270</td>
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These are the top 10 who made the BOD positions.
Our Executive officers are:
President - John Rowan 466
Vice-President - Jack Devine 485
Secretary - Barry Hagge 486
Treasurer - Larry Frazee 477
Region 2
Fred Elliott 86
I arrived in Louisville on Tuesday the 28th at 6p.m. and after settling into a very nice room I got my convention credentials. I was quickly immersed in the convention atmosphere, seeing many of the other delegates and a table full of campaign literature from the candidates.

We got down to business the next day with opening ceremonies at 9a.m., a little fanfare, and a few speeches and words about how the process was going to be conducted. After the opening I attended committee sessions on Agent Orange, public affairs, and government affairs. The Agent Orange session was not conducted very well and got way off track with many commentaries (as always, this is always a hot topic). Only about half the resolutions info was covered in the 90 minute session.

The Public Affairs session moved very quickly with some resolutions being retired because those issues are being taken over by the corporation that is part of VVA.

The government affairs session went well, and did not have a lot of changes.

One of the biggest things that was brought out during a talk from the VA and some of our representatives was that health care provided by the VA needs to be at the forefront of our government and that the VA needs to be the veterans advocate not their adversary. As we age this is becoming very important, we should urge all the veterans we know to sign up for the VA even if they are not members of VVA.

My impression of the new Board of Directors is that it will be very good. It was a pleasure to represent the chapter at the convention and I hope to have the opportunity to go again in the future.

The 2009 VVA Convention in Louisville, KY Opening Ceremonies featured keynote speaker retired US Army Lieutenant. General Russel L. Honore who stressed a commitment to the United States of America by building a one million man strong army. There is a long history of citizen volunteers who fought for freedom beginning with the Revolutionary War. He made an analogy of military service personnel being similar to a sheep dog that protects their flock, but is despised by those who are defended. They are willing to put their lives on the line to allow others to have freedom even though military service members generally don’t receive the respect they deserve.

He stated the US congress should be placed in the same health care system as veterans because then there wouldn’t be any problems with this benefit funding for those who have borne the battle. He urged everyone present to work at the grassroots level to provide assistance in keeping the country safe.

I attended the Resolutions Veterans Benefits committee hearing and several items were discussed at length by those present. Most were continued and two were amended for presentation to the delegates. Both were passed the next day with the first by a two thirds majority after lengthy debate on the convention floor and a standing count of the delegates. The next hearing was on Employment, Training, and Business Opportunities and there is a proposal to change the name to Economic Development. It was stressed to cultivate a relationship with all legislative staffers to provide them with information about your expertise on veteran's issues to advance this agenda with the appropriate personnel.

During the Government Affairs hearing the presenters said to use the VIP method of visibility, involvement, and persistence by educating your legislators and follow up with them by being persuasive without becoming a nuisance. Have a specific agenda of no more than three topics to discuss about veterans issues to allow them an ability to focus on a few versus many items. It was recommended to those who attended this hearing to sign up for Veterans Advocacy Training provided by VVA.

Former Miss America Heather French Henry addressed the delegates about health issues affecting Vietnam veterans and noted her father and uncle are both disabled Vietnam veterans. She has been a strong veteran's advocate for over 10 years after being crowned and discussed the need to be screened for prostate cancer. She recognized Ken Moore as her Veterans Service Officer and for his work on Hepatitis C.

Jose Ramos was promoting March
Our coin accompanied us to Evansville. Good thing, because Nick DeLeo challenged the group at the Awards Banquet Saturday evening.

Fred Elliott, proudly sporting his newly achieved medal

Valentine’s granddaughter requested only KFC as a souvenir. I’m sure it was the dessert menu from the Magnolia Café…?

LtCol Strobl documented his escort duty for Pvt Chance Phelps which inspired the HBO movie, Taking Chance. His son Nathan, depicted in the movie as collecting challenge coins, was also present and received two bagfuls of challenge coins from grateful veterans.


NYSC President Ned Foote accepted the award for Best State Council Website. Congratulations go to Webmaster Grant Coates and Web Admin Dana (Finn) Hallfors!

Hank Wallace, studying resolutions and candidates qualifications. Or maybe it was the dessert menu from the Magnolia Café…?

Nathan Phelps, who was also present and received two bagfuls of challenge coins from grateful veterans.

Heather French-Henry with Ray Melens

Heather French-Henry pulled audience members on stage for a rendition of the Funky Chicken.

Hobe Wallace, reading resolutions and candidates qualifications. Or maybe it was the dessert menu from the Magnolia Café…?

Michelle DelaFavre of Blue-Eyed Soul pulled audience members on stage for a rendition of the Funky Chicken.

Veteran's National Convention of America 2009

Features

Our Chapter delegation, including representatives for NYSC and incarcerated veterans of NY State.
30th as Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day and rode his bicycle across the country visiting Vet Centers and VA hospitals. Congress has passed bills every year from 2006 to 2009 making this proclamation and on Sunday March 28, 2010 there will be events all across the USA recognizing Vietnam veterans for their service to our country. Actor Jon Voigt is now working with Jose to make this possible. Jon gave a speech to the delegates and added he served in the reserves during the 1960’s, but was caught up in the anti war movement and now realizes his mistake. He apologized for the poor treatment of Vietnam veterans and repented for his youthful arrogant ways. He felt most people didn’t recognize the sacrifices of Vietnam veterans. He stated members of the same anti war group from that era are still active on certain college campuses today. Jon pledged to speak out against them in the future.

Being an actor there is skepticism about Jon's sincerity although he did stay much longer at the banquet to mingle with VVA members in attendance than the other honored guests. His future actions and deeds will determine honesty of his speech.

There were two showings of the HBO documentary Taking Chance. It’s a very moving memoir by Marine Corps. Lt. Colonel Michael Strobl about accompanying the body of Lance Corporal Chance Phelps who was killed in Iraq from Dover Air Force Base to the serviceman’s hometown Dubois, Wyoming. Now retired he received the VVA President’s in Excellence in Arts Award as did Chance’s father John who is an accomplished artist and a Vietnam veteran.

US Representative Robert Filner, D-CA, informed the delegates about a bill he submitted to provide presumptive care for all Vietnam veterans VA claims for exposure to dioxin including blue water Navy personnel. He expressed his gratitude to all those present for their service and apologized for the mistreatment that occurred when men and women returned from Vietnam. He was presented with the VVA Co-legislator of the Year Award.

Pat Sajak was recognized for his Vietnam service with Armed Forces Vietnam Radio as the Good Morning Vietnam disc jockey during his tour from 1968-70 and also received the President’s Excellence in the Arts Award.

Once again Chapter 20 was very well represented by the maximum number of delegates allowed and everyone including the AVVA representative looked sharp in their color coordinated VVA 20 golf shirts. There was a missed photo opportunity by Chapter 82 President Joe Ingino when his chapter was presented with a recognition award from the West Virginia State Council for assistance provided by VVA 82 during a coal miner’s strike in 2008. That’s one less photo that will be in the NYSC Interchange.

2009 VVA Convention Report by Valentino Gatto

I want to thank the Chapter for giving me the opportunity to take part in the 14th Annual National VVA Convention in Luigiville, I mean Louisville, Kentucky.

This was my first convention. The forum of the VVA convention was very interesting. I believe Fred did a fantastic job with the resolutions for the VVA.

The companionship that I shared with the members of the Chapter and their wives was great. There were very interesting delegates from different chapters. I have pictures that I took at the Convention.

I want to thank Kathy for putting these pictures in the BTL.

Editor’s Note: The majority of the photos in this issue were taken by Valentino, who proudly obtained a membership in the Convention’s Press Club. His Convention Report includes this photographic documentation of Convention events in an effort to give members a more realistic feel for participation as a delegate.

2009 VVA Convention Report by Tom Gleason

While at the VVA National Convention, I attended committee hearings on several subjects dealing with Agent Orange/Dioxin, Women Veterans and Minority Affairs.

Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee stressed checking for effects to not only ourselves, but to our children and grandchildren. Hearing loss and Hepatitis C, among others, are listed as potential birth defects from our exposure to Agent Orange.

Women Veterans Committee pushed for specific issues pertinent to women vets. The number of women vets has grown to 14% of the existing veteran population. Studies need to be done or continued on disparities in medical and dental healthcare by the Department of Veterans Affairs for women vets.

Minority Affairs Committee pushed forward amendments for vets and their families to receive culturally and linguistically appropriate healthcare, having people available to translate for families and vets to apprise all concerned about their treatment. This being my first National Convention, I would recommend this as a learning experience for those interested in VVA’s inner workings at the National level.

2009 VVA Convention Report by Jerry McDermott

I had the honor and privilege to attend the 14th National VVA Convention in Louisville, KY this past week.
as a delegate representing our Chapter
and State. This was my first experience
at the VVA convention. I will remem-
ber the long hours, numerous debates,
various issues, eloquent guest speakers,
officers and directors of the VVA na-
tional, members of Congress and fel-
low delegates from across our country
for many years to come.

There was a feeling of excitement
and a “get ’r done” attitude on the part
of the people I met and caucused with.
At the end of the convention, I can
honestly say that much was accom-
plished and much, much more needs
to be done. I left with a feeling of satis-
faction and renewed energy to come
back to our Chapter and community
and continue our work for veterans
and their families within our commu-
nity.

In addition to the general atten-
dance of the opening convention ses-
sion, I attended and participated in
the following committee hearings:
Agent Orange/Dioxin, Health Care,
and Minority Affairs. Our Chapter 20
delegates also attended the Region 2
caucuses to meet and pose questions
to the slate of national candidates run-
ning for office. Now that the delegates
have met, the election has been held
and confirmed, the new board of of-
ficers and directors seated, the banquet
over and the recognition awards given
out, the sights and sounds of Louisville
are etched in my memory for recall
and reuse for many years to come.

I had the pleasure of meeting
many like-minded and dedicated vet-
nerans, both men and women, who
shared their views and have marched
forward to unite and inspire others to
get involved for issues that affect vet-
neran populations of all eras.

Finally, I would like to close with
some of the comments reported by
Congressmen Chet Edwards (D-Texas)
Chair of the House Military Construc-
tion-VA Appropriations Committee
during the closing session of the con-
vention. Congressmen Edwards listed
the following recent accomplishments
for our country’s veterans. They in-
clude:
• 90% increase in health care money
from previous budgets
• New GI education bill
• Hiring 3000 doctors and 5000 nurses
in the VA health care system
• 145 new VA clinics opening across
the country
• 92 Vet centers opening across the
country
• Increase of mileage rate reimburse-
ments (first time since 1979)
• Increased funding for mental health
services, PTSD and TBI to nearly dou-
ble previous levels
• Doubling the funding for homeless
veterans to $3.8 billion
• Reopen the Category 8 enrollment
eligibility for veterans (closed since
2003)
• Approved advanced funding for VA
medical care on a two-year budgeted
basis, first time in the 80 year history
of the VA.

A new call to arms by Lt. General
Honoree, Ret. (whose quote, “Let’s not
get stuck on stupid,” has become fa-
mous) who spoke about veterans issues
and support for one another. Lt. Gen-
eral Honoree challenged the delegates
to become new members of the “Sheep
Dog Club.” What a terrific experience!
Welcome Home To All!

2009 VVA Convention Report
Ray Melens

I had last been to a national con-
vention in 1995. That convention was
held in Houston, Texas and I must say
that I feel that this year’s convention in
Louisville went a lot smoother than the
last one I attended. Not to say that this
convention didn’t have some faults,
but I think that thanks to national
president John Rowan and resolutions
chair person, Fred Elliott, the business
conducted on the convention floor
went way smoother.

I attended three committee meet-
ings while at the convention. First one
I attended was the POW/MIA com-
mittee meeting. I must say that I was
truly disappointed in this meeting and
the way it was conducted. First of all
the meeting was scheduled to begin at
1 P.M. The delegates did not get off
the convention floor till approximately
12:15 and that only left the 600 plus
delegates 45 minutes to get some lunch.

Naturally everywhere you went there
were long lines and that wouldn’t leave
enough time to get back to the meet-
ings. So a majority of us just grabbed
a bottle of water and some chips or
something to eat in the meeting. After
breaking our humps to get to the meet-
ing on time, we sat there for 30 min-
utes waiting for it to begin while those
that we believed were going to run the
meeting were exchanging personal war
stories with some other delegates that
were sitting up front. Then when it fi-
nally did start they reported that they
had no new resolutions to send to the
convention floor. They also reported
that there were no changes to be made
to any old resolutions. The one and
only important piece of information
that I got out of this meeting was that
there is a growing concern to get DNA
samples from parents and family mem-
bers for identification purposes. There
are many parents and family members
dying off without leaving DNA sam-
ples and without the samples many of
the remains that have been returned
may never be identified.

Next it was off to the ETBO
meeting. ETBO stands for Employ-
ment, Training, and Business Oppor-
tunities. This committee had two reso-
lutions that it was going to present to
be retired. There were four new resolu-
tions that were discussed in detail and
amended where found necessary. There
were some suggestions discussed by the
attendees but no more new resolutions
were written.

Finally came the Constitution
committee meeting. This turned into
quite an interesting meeting. Not so much because I attended it with RONBO, but some of the much heated debates. Some of them were over wording, some over the resolution itself and some just because of one word. Needless to say there was much lengthy discussion and beating some resolutions to death. Hard to believe but it was true politics at its best.

I also noticed during this meeting and while on the convention floor that our own RONBO has a new found talent. TEXT MESSAGING!! Who ever would have thought? This from a man who is still learning about E-mail and the internet. It just goes to show you that you can still teach an old dog new tricks.

Of course on Thursday when all of these resolutions came to the floor for voting and discussion it was a different story. Some were passed with no problem and then there were those that some people just have to pick apart. By Friday morning though, all were settled.

Friday morning was Election Day for VVA. There were a few tight races but everyone will be glad to know that our own Fred Elliott won his tightly contested race (unopposed) for Region II Director. Congratulations to Fred and I’m sure we all know that he will continue to serve Region II as well as he has in the past.

On opening day of the convention, one of the many guest speakers we had during the convention was Lt. Gen. Honore’. He was the Commander of Joint Task Force Katrina and responsible for coordinating military relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina affected areas across the Gulf Coast. I have to tell you that he is one hell of a motivational speaker. He left us all with some sayings and expressions that we’ll never forget. I’m sure if he had asked us all to re-up after his speech, I think every delegate probably would have.

Among some of the other special guests was Lt.Col. Mike Strobl from the movie Taking Chance. Kevin Bacon played him in the movie and Chance Phelps Dad, John also came to the convention. We mustn’t forget Miss America 2000, Heather French Henry. As always she was a real joy to be with and talk to. Then there was Jon Voight who came before the convention delegates, at his own expense, to ask our forgiveness for the foolish things he did back during the Vietnam War. All of these people we got to meet and to talk to. There were others there that I’m sure will be mentioned in other reports.

During the convention National President John Rowan reported how he would like us as a national organization to make sure to get the word out to ALL veterans about the benefits and health care that we are entitled to. Again Chapter 20 can be proud of the fact that we are ahead of the others in this mission. We have begun with our OUTREACH trailer and I’m sure we will continue to get the word out in other ways as well.

I think that all in all it was a rewarding experience to be able to attend and represent Chapter 20 at the 14th VVA National Convention.

2009 VVA Convention Report
by Ralph Pascale

The 14th VVA National Convention was held this year in Louisville KY, a very modern, clean (litter wise), city; friendly people, clean streets, semi-cosmopolitan. Unfortunately it is also ranked as the # 1 polluted city in the USA, and the Ohio river, which runs through the heart of Louisville, is the third most polluted river in the US. Maybe that explains why so many of us got sick on this trip.

The convention opened with a very inspirational, moving, patriotic musical act by “Blue Eyed Soul” and then a very stirring, rah, rah speech given by Lt. Gen. Russell Honore, the commander of “Joint Task Force Katrina”, a real “boots on the ground” kind of leader. That afternoon was dedicated to committee meetings. I attended three - Membership, VA benefits, and Minority Affairs.

The time in the Membership committee meetings was devoted almost exclusively to problems the various chapter membership chairs were having communicating with National on an ongoing basis. I personally have had a few problems with National not answering my phone calls or e-mail inquiries. It seems to me (and this is just my opinion) that the National Membership Chair isn’t "hands on" enough. Many of his answers were of the "I don’t know, I’m not there," ambiguous variety. I feel he should have had his staff people at the meeting to clear up the confusion. He did say that National was going to be getting new software for their database that should make life easier for everyone. "We’ll be Watching."

The VA Benefits committee meeting was crammed full of resolutions that had to be dealt with - VB-2-95 Boards For Correction of Military Records (returned to committee); VB-3-95 Less Than Honorable Administrative Discharges (rewrite); VB-4-95 DVA Overpayments (retired); VB-5-95 Civil Liberties of Active Duty Military Personnel (retired); VB-6-95 Just Comp. For injured Active Duty Military Personnel (continued); VB-7-95 Class Actions at US Court of Appeals for Veterans claims (con’t); VB-9-95 DVA Implementation of US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Decisions (con’t); VB-10-95 Veterans Benefits & Services (con’t); VB-11-95 Veterans Benefits System (con’t); VB-12-95 DVA Ser. Con. Dis. Comp. & Mil. Pay offset (con’t); VB-13-95 Preservation of VVA Rep. at Nat’l level (con’t); VB-14-95 Atty. Rep. at the VA (con’t);
Features

VB-15-95 Veterans & Hepatitis C (con't); VB-16-95 Copy of Military Records Upon Discharge (con’t); VB-17-95 Criminal Background Check for Incompetent Veterans (retired); VB-18-95 VAVS program (con’t); VB-19-95 Veterans Environmental Health Effects (con’t); VB-20-95 Participation in the Process of Accrediting DVA Med. Centers (con’t); VB-21-95 Military Health Care (con’t); VB-22-95 Sexual Harassment (con’t); VB-23-95 Hours of Operation of DVA Med. Facilities (con’t); VB-24-95 DVA Hospice Care (con’t); VB-25-95 Proper Use of Real Estate at W L.A. DVA Med. Cen. (transfer to G.A.).

As you can see this was a very busy committee meeting.

The last committee meeting I attended was Minority Affairs. This committee meeting was almost totally taken up with discussion of a resolution to have the DVA provide translators to members of a hospitalized veteran’s family. This resolution failed on the convention floor, (too costly).

Two of the nights were devoted to “meet the candidates” and state caucuses. One afternoon a group of us saw the HBO movie, “Taking Chance,” starring Kevin Bacon. This is a very moving, almost documentary type accounting of one officer’s escorting of a fallen Marine’s remains back to his family. I urge all my brothers and sisters to see this movie. On hand at the showing and as one of our guest speakers was the Marine officer who wrote this story, and the father of Chance Phelps was there also. He received an arts appreciation award, (he is a gifted painter).

The convention ended with an awards banquet, along with actor Jon Voight giving an impassioned and sometimes funny speech of his involvement in securing a National Vietnam Veterans Day. The banquet meal was one of the best I have ever had at such a mass feeding and the band was very good and thanks to Marie Elliott, my dance partner.

I urge and encourage all active VVA 20 members to participate in the VVA governing process by becoming a convention delegate someday and attend a National Convention.

2009 VVA Convention Report by Joe Peck

Being a new delegate for the 14th National VVA Convention, it was an honor to be chosen to participate and learn the functional mechanics of this organization. From the minute I arrived, and up to the closing ceremonies and banquet, I experienced a camaraderie among our chapter members and other veterans of this great nation that I have never seen before or was part of in my life time. The opening ceremony was based with speeches of several committee heads, politicians and an especially rousing speech from Lieutenant General Honore. The entire VVA embraced and approved of his speech and comments with a great roar of applause and a standing ovation.

During the POW/MIA committee meeting there were no new resolutions to discuss, however there was much talk on what other chapters do and what is in the works for the future. The Membership Group committee meeting was especially motivating. In fact, Ralph Pascale (Chapter 20 Membership Chair) and I picked up some very interesting ideas which we could incorporate to help increase our own membership. The Governmental Affairs committee was more detailed with discussion on several resolutions and some retirements of others. One of the more informative and important aspect of the convention was the caucus for new and old candidates running for board openings. Their responses to the overwhelming questions provided insight to how they will handle upcoming issues/problems. The convention itself was very enlightening when time came to vote on resolutions, with pro and con speeches ranging on both sides of the floor. After all was said and done, votes were cast and resolutions either passed or failed.

After the business of the convention was over, we had the opportunity to listen and meet Jon Voight, Pat Sa-jack (Vietnam Veteran) and Heather French (former Miss America and an advocate for veterans’ benefits). We were also entertained by the former Ding-A-Ling girls. There was a showing of the HBO movie “Taking Chance.” This heart wrenching movie is about a young Marine who is killed in Iraq and the Lieutenant Colonel who volunteers to escort his remains home. During this trip he experienced and documented the patriotism and sadness we as a nation show our servicemen who have died in battle. After the movie, we had the honor to meet and speak with Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl, his son Nathan, and personally thanked him for what he had done. Lieutenant Colonel Strobl and John Phelps (father of the Chance Phelps, the fallen Marine) both addressed the Delegates at the end of the Convention and both received a never ending applause and standing ovation.

In summary, I feel that the members of Chapter 20 who attended this Convention, have made a significant difference in the VVA organization for the welfare of all our veterans.

2009 VVA Convention Report by Pat Pudetti

Once again the VVA National put on a great convention. My thanks to all of the participants who added to the conventions success.

First off, our Chapter delegates were right there, attending all of their designated hearings, keeping in contact with one another and showing support to the New York Chapters and State Council.

Continued on page 14
New Officers and Directors were sworn in at Saturday's closing session.

Heather French Henry, Ken Moore Francisco Muniz III, Editor of The Interchange, accepting award for Best State Council Newsletter

Isn't it usually the women who are stereotyped as the shoppers? Joe Peck loved the sportswear in Hard Rock Café’s gift shop.

Linda West, author of Beyond the Rice Paddies, a memoir of growing up in Vietnam during the war. She tearfully thanked those present for their presence in Vietnam, making her feel safer as a child.

Can we buy a vowel, Pat? Joe Peck and many others flooded the Meet and Greet event on Friday afternoon to talk with celebrities.

The gals were invited to attend caucuses as well. They truly appreciated the comments by Heather French Henry – “Behind every great man there is a woman – rolling her eyes.”

Heather French Henry, Ken Moore
Vietnam Veterans of America
THRIFT STORE, CHAPTER 20, LLC
1199 East Main Street, Rochester, NY 14609

Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm
Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm

Car Donations 8:30am - 5:00pm
Truck Pick-up: 9am - 4:30pm
(weather permitting)

~ Delivery Available ~
Truck Pick-up #482-8016
Thrift Store #482-8036

All donations go to the Thrift Store at the address above.

DAVID J. KAUFFMAN POST #41
JEWISH WAR VETERANS
THE OLDEST ACTIVE VETERANS
ORGANIZATION
SUPPORTS THE VIETNAM VETS

LARRY SCHULMAN, QUARTERMASTER, 271-6967
The list of guests was outstanding - for instance: Jon Voight, Pat Sajak, Heather French, and the Blue-Eyed Soul (Michelle Delafave and Lindsay Bloom) to mention a few. The authors were also in abundance, Eric Haney (Inside Delta Force), Linda West (Beyond the Rice Paddies). John Phelps, an artist/painter who is the father of Chance Phelps, the Marine whose story was told on HBO about how the remains of this Marine were escorted home by Lt. Col. Mike Strobl. It is a story that had a tear in everyone’s eye who attended the show. A special touch was when Lt. Col. Strobl addressed the audience at the end of the showing. And what made it so special was his son was with him.

An appearance by Bill Nelson, HBO’s CEO and Chief Executive was signing pictures and copies of the DVD (Taking Chance) that he gave to all delegates free.

My first hearing was at the Veterans Benefits Committee. Jerry Klein is the chair of the committee, but due to some health issues was unable to run the meeting. John Margowski stepped in for Jerry. We went over the resolutions and explained why we retired some and kept others on the books. The room where the hearing was held was packed seeing that benefits are one of the top priorities for our veterans and also the new veterans just coming home. Out of the 24 presented resolutions, 16 were kept, two were transferred to Health Care Committee and the rest were retired. In the coming issue of “The Veteran,” there will be a list of all the resolutions that were kept on the books. One that should be mentioned was the preservation of the VVA service representation at the National Level. The priority of VVA is as a veterans service organization. The priority for funding shall be given to these service representatives. Also Judicial review, which handles the veterans cases in front of the Courts at no cost to the veteran.

Veterans Health Care Committee was the second hearing that I attended. Pat Bessigano, the Chair of the committee began by reading over the resolutions that had changes to them. There were questions but Pat answers were honest, up front and clearly explained why the changes were made and how they would be more in tune with all veteran’s current issues. Out of that, only two were retired and the rest were adopted. One resolution that got a lot of support was the one dealing with HC-2-07 quality of health care. “The first priority of the DVA must be to provide the highest quality medical and psychological treatment at no cost to veterans for illnesses and injuries incurred during and as a result of military service.”

Also the Health Care Council, that has been formed recently, has a new form to print out regarding medical information. Go to www.vva.org and look into Health Council for this form and information that is available. Their site is www.veteranshealth.org

Prostate cancer is one of the big issues that face Vietnam veterans, and as a committee in the past we have produced pamphlets on the condition explaining to vets and their families that all Veterans who severed in Vietnam or handled A.O. should get a prostate screening exam. National has these and has been sending them out to chapters and State Councils to pass out to their members.

I also attended the Government Affairs hearings. Their chair was John Miterko. There were not any resolutions retired so John gave us some ideas on how to contact our representatives and what we need before going up to their offices.

- Know the number of veterans that are in your area.
- Pick the most important two or three items you want addressed at the meeting.
- Do your home work before you have the meeting.
- Talk to their staff or assistance, many times they are the ones who can get you in to see the Senators or Representative.
- Make sure you talk to both sides, Democrats and Republicans.
- Make sure you have an agenda.

Join the veteran’s coalition in your area (VFW, American Legion, DAV, etc.) Better to have a large number of veterans all working together, then individuals trying to get their attention. He did mention that there is a State that has gotten their 100% disabled veterans a 100% tax exemption on their houses. They also worked with their legislators to get a scratch off that the money goes towards a veterans fund in that State. Something some of us talked about at the convention.

The last thing that I attended was a Town hall meeting for Agent Orange. It was put on by Mokie Porter and AVVA. The panel consisted of George Claxon, Sandy Miller, Alan Oaks, and Mokie Porter. Jim Doyle was the monitor and Nancy Switzer was also part of the panel.

Points of interest:

The Agent Orange that was sprayed in Vietnam was 1000 times stronger than what was used in the civilian areas.

As we heard, Parkinson’s disease, high blood pressure, and a heart condition are now being associated with exposure to AO and possible presumption. Conditions.

In Vietnam there were 15 different herbicides used.

There were 7 chemical manufacturers that supplied A.O. to our government.

From 1962 to 1971 about 21,000 gallons of Agent Orange was sprayed over 10 million acres in Vietnam.

The heaviest concentration was in III corps than I corps, II corps and IV corps.

4.8 million Vietnamese were exposed, resulting in 400,00 deaths and...
disabilities and over 500,00 children with birth defects.

The Ford Foundation is doing a study on Birth defects of children in Vietnam, but not including children of Vietnam veterans who were exposed to dioxin.

As you can see the hand outs were very informative and if anyone would like a copy please contact me.

There are some websites for more information.Agentorangezone@gmail.com

One thing this panel is asking for are stories from veterans regarding their children and their children’s children who have birth defects. You can send them in at the following: agentorangezone.blogspot.com

Again these information packets are available from Nation VVA by contacting Mokie Porter @ 301-585-4000 ext. 146 or contacting Nancy Switzer.

I’m sure with all of the delegates writing their own reflections on the convention, we will have questions at our up coming meetings.

I just wanted to thank the Board for allowing me to represent our veterans and their families at the 14th National Convention. If you have any questions you can contact me by e-mail or phone number in the BTL.

Please make sure if you know a veteran that you tell him to call the VA and get enrolled in the Health care system or get information regarding health care benefits.

Until the next time.

Semper Fi,

Pat Pudetti
Veterans Benefits Counselor.

2009 VVA Convention Report
by Ron Trovato

A truly great convention, quiet by most standards, which was okay with me. Kenny, Ralph and I arrived in Louisville on Monday and had dinner with Miss America, Heather French, and her family. We did enjoy their hospitality. Tuesday found us working the vets information booth with Kenny and Heather and that night the Chapter 20 delegation went to dinner at the Hard Rock Café and later out for drinks. The opening of the convention on Wednesday morning was emotional for me, especially the color guard from Ft. Knox and the placement of the service flags. John Rowan ran a smooth and efficient convention and a tip of the hat to Ned Foote for keeping the New York delegation fairly clean and sober. Our own Fred Elliott, Region 2 Director, did his usual masterful job in answering questions with intelligent and relevant information. Why he does this is beyond me.

The keynote speaker on Day 1 was Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Honore who was responsible for bailing out New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. And he was terrific! I don’t think anyone in that room would have minded serving under such an outstanding, no-nonsense officer.

On Thursday the delegates voted on the proposed constitutional amendments and resolutions and VVA gave out awards, several of which went to New York State. Ned Foote accepted for the New York State Council the Website of the Year award as well as the State Council Newsletter of the Year award. Chapter 20 once again won the Chapter Newsletter of the Year award and thanks to Kathy Gleason for keeping BTL’s death grip on this award.

Friday found the convention business still going smoothly and awards were given to Bill Kissinger of Chapter 689 at Angola Prison in Louisiana for Incarcerated Member of the Year. Chapter of the Year went to Chapter 751 of Lawton, OK and a VVA Commendation medal was given to Clifford Riley of Chapter 649 in Ohio. The assistant secretary of the DVA spoke to the delegates just before Heather French, Miss America 2000, stole the show. Her passion for veterans and for her foundation was unmistakable.

On Saturday morning the election results were announced and the majority of elected board members were those that had been endorsed by the New York delegation. Once again our own Fred Elliott squeaked by unopposed, despite my and Kenny’s politicking for him. Several US congressmen addressed the assembly, including Chet Edwards, who is on the House Veterans Committee. Jose Ramos and actor Jon Voight then spoke about their official “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day” scheduled for 3/28/10. You could have heard a pin drop on the convention floor when Jon Voight spoke about the anti-war/anti-veteran feeling in the country in the 1960s and how he came to change in his appreciation for Vietnam veterans over the years and the profound respect he has for veterans. He then swore in all the new officers and board members. Later on Kenny and I went to a local eatery for lunch, and in walks Jon Voight with a couple of the guys from California. Great guy to talk to, very committed. The convention – a good time was had by all!

Veterans Incarcerated Committee - National chairman Terry Hubert gave his report to this well-attended hearing. He talked about ensuring the identification of veterans within the criminal justice system and treatment services that were available. Terry also provided information on support and re-entry services for incarcerated veterans as well as benefits information they may qualify for. The group then discussed the proposed veterans incarcerated resolutions, and input was forthcoming from the attendees. Gordie Lane and Peter Bronstad, from Chapter 103 then gave a presentation on the Onondaga County Veterans Diversion program and suggestions for implementation by other chapters.

Homeless Veterans Committee - San-
dr Miller, National Homeless Veterans chair, gave the committee report. She discussed the problems with VA reimbursement for homeless veterans and housing vouchers for public housing. Her premise in working with the homeless was that as a group they are generally easy to work with, and mental health issues are very prevalent in this group. She also noted that for those individuals that want help, give them programs that work and the Department of Labor can do more in this area. Proposed resolutions were then discussed, as well as those that should be continued and retired.

Constitution Committee - This very well attended committee hearing was chaired by Leslie DeLong and to be charitable, a spirited and lengthy debate ensued on the proposed constitutional amendments. Fred Elliott was present and he attempted to clarify some of the more convoluted issues that were debated. Fred did his best and the continued discussion ensured an interesting next day on the convention floor. We were not disappointed.

2009 VVA Convention Report
by Hank Wallace

The VVA National Convention had many highlights for attendees with substantial information disseminated to all delegates. There were two very significant highlights for me.

First was a committee focused on getting veterans of all generations into the VA system as well as communicating to a broad audience about the effects of dioxin (Agent Orange and others) in the health of our children and grandchildren. These are both areas that the VVA needs to work on for the future.

It was apparent to me, and I’m sure to others that we are part of an organization that is doing many good things for veterans and their families. We should be very proud to be a part of it.

2009 VVA Convention Report
AVVA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
by Kathy Gleason

I had the pleasure of attending two conferences in one – talk about multi-tasking! While VVA hosted its 14th National Convention, AVVA held its Leadership Conference. (These organizations alternate convention years with leadership conference years.) It was a challenge dividing my time, but so worthwhile and rewarding for me.

At the AVVA luncheon, we heard Heather French Henry talk about her commitment to her foundation and its advocacy for veterans. She commented about her dad and spent a fair amount of time lauding our own Ken Moore for his tireless efforts in helping her. I think all this beautiful and gracious woman would have to do is put out a general call for assistance and these vets would be tripping over each other to be first in line. Somehow, though, Ken is her chosen one and does a fine job as Keeper of the Crown.

I was fortunate enough to be sitting in the “peanut gallery” of the VVA Convention floor Thursday morning when the announcement was made that this very newsletter won (again!) the award for best newsletter for chapters with at least 200 members. This was a personal goal of mine when I began my work as its editor just over a year ago. Bruce McDaniel had made this award almost a tradition and I wanted to continue that in his honor. Thanks, Bruce, for your inspiration! Soon they will have to dedicate an entire wall in the Board Room for the BTL.

The rest of my time was split between AVVA and the convention floor, listening to speakers, observing the convention process (quite an awesome experience) and finding a little time to enjoy the nearby community. It was a treat to hear the calliope on the riverboat one afternoon as the rain cleared and we sat awaiting the trolley.

It’s a huge expense for the Chapter to send delegates to convention, and when you go for the first time you really don’t know what to expect. When you see the connection between our local Chapter and this incredibly large, dynamic National organization you can’t help but be filled with pride. Thanks for letting me represent you – and now I’ll work toward winning that award one more time – but the next one is for YOU!
NYSC Talk Group
You are invited to join the “NYSC Talk Group” and interactive online email community. It’s a way for all of us to communicate freely between the NYSC, its Chapters, its Members, at Large Members and the AVVA. As a member of this group you can raise issues, ask questions, share information and resources with each other around topics related to the VA, VVA, AVVA, and the NYSC. It is open to all members of the VVA under the NYSC, its Chapters, its Members, At Large Members and the AVVA. Register by visiting http://nyvietnamvets.org/talkgroup.html. Upon registering you will receive a confirmation email with the NYSC Talk Group Rules. If you are not a VVA member, in the “VVA MEMBER #” area type “Non Member.” Your request will be reviewed and you will be notified appropriately.

National Government Affairs Committee
President John Rowan appointed Patrick Welch as the Chairman of the National Government Affairs Committee.

This committee works to set the legislative agenda and policy initiatives for our work in Washington, DC, at the state and local level throughout the country.

Veteran’s Radio Show
HOMETOWN 1230 WECK PRESENTS - The Veteran’s Radio Show Monday’s 11am to 12 Noon - Information – Advocacy – Action for veteran and military issues that affect the nation’s 25 million veterans, those who are currently serving in the Armed Forces and their families. Hosted by Patrick Welch.

Golf Tournament
1st Annual VFW Post 8495 Golf Tournament, Saturday, Sept. 26 at Eagle Vale Golf Course. 12:00 noon registration, 1:00pm Tee Time, 6:30pm dinner (VFW Post). $75/person. Scramble Format. Call Dick Guibe (223-4400) or Joe Meindl (223-1234) for more information.

Notice to Members
In the best interest of the members of Chapter 20 we no longer recommend the use of Barefoot Sportswear in Spencerport, NY for embroidery or other work on Chapter 20 Gear.

roll call: b.o.d. attendance 2009

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X=Present E=Excused A=Absent
John Edward Crowley

Warrant Officer Gary B. Smith, pilot; William E. Boyle, aircraft commander; Staff Sergeant John E. Crowley, crew chief, Staff Sergeant Jesus O. Alvarez, door gunner; and an unspecified number of passengers were in a UH-1H helicopter (tail #68-16520) on a classified “Prairie Fire” operation in the lower panhandle area of Laos.

“Prairie Fire” teams performed deep penetration missions of strategic reconnaissance and interdiction which were also called, depending on the time frame, “Shining Brass” missions. The missions operated under MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observation Group).

MACV-SOG was a joint service high command unconventional warfare task force engaged in highly classified operations throughout Southeast Asia. The 5th Special Forces channeled personnel into MACV-SOG (although it was not a Special Forces group) through Special Operations Augmentation (SOA), which provided their “cover” while under secret orders to MACV-SOG.

When the helicopter was about 25 feet above the ground, it suddenly lost power and crashed. No reason for the crash could be determined. Crowley and one passenger were trapped inside the aircraft.

A medic from another helicopter entered the wreckage and managed to free the passenger, but noticed that Crowley was firmly wedged between the aircraft and the ground. After two or three minutes of effort, the medic gave up trying to free him. The medic determined that Crowley was dead, as there was no pulse, and he could get no response from him.

All personnel were extracted and another rescue team was inserted just before dark, but was unable to get back to the wrecked aircraft because of enemy activity. The second team was extracted the next day, and no further efforts were made to go back to the crash site.

Crowley was flying in support of an exceedingly dangerous mission. For every insertion like the one of August 10, 1970 that was detected and stopped, dozens of other commando teams safely slipped past NVA lines to strike a wide range of targets and collect vital information. The number of MACV-SOG missions conducted with Special Forces reconnaissance teams into Laos and Cambodia was 452 in 1969. It was the most sustained American campaign of raiding, sabotage and intelligence-gathering waged on foreign soil in U.S. military history. MACV-SOG’s teams earned a global reputation as one of the most combat effective deep-penetration forces ever raised.

Crowley was listed Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered.

President William Clinton announced during his Memorial Day Address at Arlington Cemetery, “I also want to tell you today about the latest American soldier to come home. Just last week our team of specialists identified finally and official the remains of a soldier of the 1st Cavalry Regiment of the Americal division, whose Huey helicopter was flying in the weeds at 25 feet over Laos in the summer of 1970 when it lost power and crashed. The young soldier died immediately. When others rushed to the scene to bring his body out, they were forced back by enemy fire. When they tried again a short time later, they were again forced back. But finally, America returned to recover its own. Years later, with the help of several governments, extensive interviews, excavations and DNA testing, a positive identification was made. Army Specialist John E. Crowley, of Williamson, New York, forever 20 years old, was laid to rest here in Arlington Cemetery on Friday in a simple ceremony attended by his mother, brother, cousins, nieces and nephews. For the life and service of Specialist Crowley, for the sacrifice of his family and every family that has suffered such loss, America is eternally grateful.”

Chapter 20’s Honor Guard has visited Specialist Crowley’s grave at Arlington on every trip to Washington, DC, to pay special honors.
Having been recently awarded the “Wounded Bugler Medal” by the Chapter, I became curious about some of the other decorations we veterans wear so proudly. Everybody knows a Purple Heart is awarded for being wounded or killed in combat and that a Bronze or Silver Star is for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States.

But how many of us know why we were presented a National Defense Service Medal? I always thought you were given the NDSM just for being in the Armed Forces, but that’s not the case. The NDSM was not authorized until 1953 and is restricted to certain periods of service; June 27, 1950 to July 27, 1954 (the Korean War), January 1, 1961 to August 14, 1974 (the Vietnam War), August 2, 1990 to November 30, 1995 (Desert Shield / Desert Storm), and September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined (Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom). Additionally, Executive Order 12776 of 1991 authorized awarding the medal to all members of the Reserve Forces whether or not on active duty during the designated period of the Gulf War.

The front of the medal shows the Bald Eagle standing on a sword and palm branch and has the words, National Defense. The Eagle is the national emblem of the United States, the sword represents the Armed Forces, and the palm branch is symbolic of victory.

The reverse side of the medal has the shield from the United States’ great seal flanked by a wreath of laurel and oak representing achievement and strength. The broad center stripe of yellow on the ribbon represents high ideals. The red, white, and blue stripes represent our national flag with the red indicating hardness and valor, the white stands for purity of purpose, and the blue stands for perseverance and justice.

The Vietnam Service Medal (VSM) was authorized in 1965 for military personnel serving in the Vietnam Theater of Operations July 3, 1965 through March 28, 1973. Personnel must have served in Vietnam on temporary duty for at least 30 consecutive / 60 nonconsecutive days or have served in combat with a unit directly supporting a military operation in Southeast Asia. If you served in direct support of operations in Vietnam while in Laos, Cambodia, or Thailand, you are also eligible for this award.

Shown on the front of the medal is an oriental dragon in a grove of bamboo trees with the words Republic of Vietnam Service. The reverse side shows a crossbow with a torch and has the words, United States of America. The colors of the ribbon are those of the Republic of Vietnam flag with the red stripes representing the three ancient Vietnamese empires of Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China while the green represents the Vietnamese jungle. Bronze and silver stars are authorized to signify participation in any of the 17 designated campaigns during the inclusive period.

Established by the government of Vietnam in May 1964, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal was authorized to members of the U.S. Armed Forces by DoD in June 1966. To qualify for the RVCM you must have served in RVN for 6 months during March 1, 1961 to March 28, 1973 OR served outside RVN and contributed direct combat support for 6 months and be qualified for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Vietnam) or the Vietnam Service Medal during the period of service required to qualify for the RVN Campaign Medal OR have served for less than 6 months and have been wounded by hostile forces, captured by hostile forces, but later escaped, was rescued or released; or killed in action. For those personnel assigned in RVN on January 28, 1973, a person must have served a minimum of sixty days in RVN as of that date or have completed a minimum of 60 days service in RVN during January 28, 1973 to March 28, 1973.

The medal is a six-pointed star with gold star points and a green center disk with a map of Vietnam in silver with three red flames representing the three regions of Vietnam. The reverse side has VIET-NAM inscribed in a lined circle in the center with the name of the medal inscribed in Vietnamese text at the upper and lower edges. The device is a silver ribbon inscribed 1960-.

Further information on United States Military Medals can be found in the following resources:

Help Base Greater Rochester
(www.hbrochester.org) is an online resource for veterans, service members, and their families in Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates Counties. The mission of Help Base Greater Rochester is to enhance services by coordinating, mobilizing and educating the community-at-large about the issues facing veterans, service members, and their families and advocating for the necessary services to ensure that these community members can regain and maintain their physical, emotional, and economic well-being.

Greece Memorial Post 206
The Newest Post in Monroe County

Meeting the 3rd Thursday of the month 6:30 - 7:45 pm
at
The Legacy at Park Crescent — Mt. Read Blvd.
For details, please call 227-4383 or 225-4228.

Vietnam Veterans of America
CHAPTER 20
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William H. Wallace
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

636 Middle Road
Henrietta, NY 14467
585-334-5352
Kenny Moore is under a tremendous personal strain going to the convention. The pressure on him is unrelenting. He fears he is losing his Nazi dictator death-grip on Chapter 20’s delegates and he trusts no one. He is driving me and Ralph Pascale in his toaster-like Toyota Scion which is basically a glorified Yugo. Kenny is already carping about his poor gas mileage which is in the neighborhood of three miles to the gallon. Ralph is in the back seat, cooking with an oven running off an adapter to Kenny’s cigarette lighter. “Hey, Ron,” says Ralph. “You guys ready for another turkey up there? This one’s done.” Kenny is twitching noticeably.

Her spirit broken after the first day, Consuela the Maid trudges once again beaten and bedraggled into our room which has been re-named The Wolf’s Lair, command center of Chapter 20’s Eastern Front. She pulls a flask from her apron and takes a long drink of tequila. She braces herself for another round of indignities such as scattered underwear, Bestiality Today magazine, and loads that no power flush toilet could handle. I realize now that breakfast burritos tear through you like German Panzers through Belgium. I’m also sure that deep in the recesses of my childhood there is a reason for my aversion to flushing the toilet, although this is probably small consolation to Consuela’s family. Shortly thereafter Jerry McDermott and I avert our eyes as they load Consuela’s stretch-er into the ambulance, another victim of global warming. She is screaming obscenities about the gringos in room 1075.

Kenny Moore has been completely taken over by his paranoias. He is like Hitler at Stalingrad. The last resolution was passed by over 300 votes and he is pacing the floor, sweating like Bill Clinton in church. “Where’s Ralph? Trovato, go find Ralph,” he orders. “Jawhol, Herr Obersturmfuhrer!” I reply. I go up to Ralph’s room and upon opening the door a blast of Arctic air slaps me in the face. “Ralph, you got the AC turned on freezing!” I say. “It’s like a meat locker in here.” “Precisely,” replies Ralph cheerfully. My eyes begin to adjust to the dim lighting. There’s a side of beef hanging in the corner. Ralph has got a meat grinder set up between the beds, and is wearing a blood-splattered apron. He’s feeding one of Pat Pudetti’s Gucci loafers into the machine. “Hey, Ron, I’m making Italian sausage for tonight. Pass me the butcher paper.” Another memory to repress.

I blow off Kenny’s briefing about where the Allies will land and go with Joe Peck and Valentino Gatto to the Crab Shack for lunch. We get the most annoying waiter possible, the kid won’t shut up and leave us alone. He’s showing Joe Peck how to eat a lobster, devouring half of it in the process. He’s like a rash that won’t go away. Because of my Vietnam training, I could kill this guy with a blade of grass. I glance at my Italian friend, Valentino, who gives me the Sicilian look for murder. I counter with a Joe Pesci smile and the Sicilian look for murder-suicide.

Our beloved Fred Elliott is in his wheelchair. He took a pounding the night before at the Region 2 caucus. Delegates, sensing his vulnerability, are circling him like sharks. He’s like the French at Dien Bien Phu. Or anywhere for that matter. They sense that he is soft and bloated like an Obama budget. A delegate from Region 5 moves in to begin the feeding frenzy. “Hey buddy, I got a stimulus package for you right here!” I yell out grasping myself between the legs with the international hello sign. The sharks scatter for easier, weaker prey. “Fred, nobody dumps on you except me!” Fred’s eyes mist over. “This is my last territorial demand!” thunders Kenny, as he smacks a map of Poland with his riding crop. I excuse myself from the PTSD committee hearing and bump right into Jon Voight. This is my big chance. I tell him of my past acting in the North Manual Trades High School Class of 68 production of “Robin Hood” where I played the part of a tree. He appreciates my talent and offers me the part of a corpse in his next movie. “Security!” he yells out, to close the deal, and a flock of blue shirts descend upon me. My convention is over, pending Grand Jury. Pesky stalking laws...

Any past or present member of the United States Armed Services, Active or Reserve, is eligible for an engraved paver brick. For information and an order form, please contact the Chapter 20 office at 482-7396.
**AVVA HOLDS TOWN MEETING AT NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

A Town Hall meeting to discuss the birth defects, cancers and learning disabilities affecting the children and grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans was held at the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) Leadership Conference. I was so honored to have as panelist, Sandi Wilson, George Claxton, Mokie Porter and Alan Oates, step up to my request after the Ford Foundation came out with their report. Jim Doyle was the facilitator.

The forum explored issues surrounding Agent Orange exposure, including scientific information, health effects, intergenerational birth defects, personal stories of exposure and illness, and methods for educating the public and elected representatives about the issues of Vietnam Veterans, their children, and families.

We chose Louisville for this important forum in view of the groundbreaking effort of the Louisville Charter, a group committed to the work to protect human health and the environment form the effects of exposure to toxic chemicals.

If you are a Vietnam Veteran and were exposed to Agent Orange, and you have a child or grandchild that is affected by an illness, etc., please contact me. We are taking this Town Hall meeting on the road. Our aim is to do stories of veterans and their families in National newspapers to get the word out, as well as educating the public. We need you. Thank you.

If anyone would like to share their child or grandchild’s life you can email it to agentorangezone@gmail.com

We also have a blog set up that gives information on this subject at: agentorangezone.blogspot.com

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**membership application**

**Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 20**

Name: __________________________________________ Date of Birth: _______________________ Sex: ☐ M ☐ F
Address: ________________________________________ Home Phone: ( ___ ) _______________________________
City: ___________________________________________ Work Phone: ( ____ ) _______________________________
Zip: _______________ Country: _________ Email Address: _________________________________________ ☐ W ☐ H
Chapter # (if known) ________________________________ Sponsor: ________________________________________

I am not a Vietnam Vet, but I want to help Vietnam veterans and their families. Please accept my donation: _____ ☐ AVVA Membership
☐ $10 ☐ $20 ☐ $50 ☐ Other ($________)

**Eligibility:** Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Military (for other than training purposes) between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975 (in-country Vietnam), or between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975 (for Vietnam-era veterans).

**Term:**
- ☐ 1 year: $20
- ☐ Life Membership: $250 (ages 49 and under), $225 (ages 50-55), $200 (ages 56-60),
- ☐ 3 years: $50 $175 (ages 61-65), $150 (ages 66 and over)

**Payment Options:** ☐ Check ☐ Money Order

Return this application, along with a copy of your DD214, to: Vietnam Veterans of America, P.O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14612

VVA is a non-profit veterans service organization. Programs and services are funded by member dues and public donations.
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Incarcerated Veterans ......................... Sue Oleksyn • soleksyn@yahoo.com • 663-5255
Marching Unit .................................... Ron Trovato • 544-8470
Membership ..................................... Ralph Pascale • 755-2560 (c)
POW/MIA.......................................... Gail Bologna-Melens • powmia20@aol.com • 392-2079
Social Events .................................... Dick Oleksyn • roleksyn@yahoo.com • 663-5255
Speakers Bureau .............................. Geno Lenyk • g33153@ntid.rit.edu • 423-0206
Veterans Affairs/Benefits ...................... Pat Pudetti • patrickusmc1@yahoo.com • 753-6040
Veterans Walk ................................... Chuck Macaluso • chuckmac66@yahoo.com • 225-8288

VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS
AND INFORMATION
Greater Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial.................. 585-753-7275
Ira Jacobson American Legion
Post #474 • 663-7030
VA Clinic - 465 Westfall Road.............. 463-2600
Veterans Outreach Center ...................... 546-1081
Vet Center ........................................ 232-5040
Veterans Administration ...................... 800-827-1000
NYS Council ..................................... 888-678-VETS
Monroe County Veterans Service
Agency ............................................. 753-6040
e-mail: serviceofficer@yahoo.com
Veterans Benefits Hotline .................... 800-827-1000
Veterans Bill of Rights ......................... 800-342-3358
VA Medical Center in Batavia ............. 585-297-1000
VA Hospital in Buffalo ....................... 716-834-9200
VA Medical Center in Canandaigua ....... 394-2000
VA Medical Center in Bath .................. 607-664-4000
V.V. of America in Washington .......... 800-VVA-1316
V.V. Memorial Fund “The Wall” ........... 202-393-0090

Operation Welcome Home ..................... 234-4694

WEB SITES/E-MAIL ADDRESSES
Veterans Widows International Network:
members@aol.com/vetwindows
NYS Department Health: www.health.state.ny.us/nvyets
Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland
Park: www.monroecounty.gov/parks-highland.php
Operation Welcome Home: www.operationwelcomehome.org
VVA New York State Council: www.nylvietnamvets.org

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Donation Pick-up ............................... 482-8016
VVA Vehicle Donations ...................... 224-8494
VVA Chapter 20 ................................ info@vva20.org • 482-7396
**Betwen the Lines**

Between the Lines is published monthly by Chapter 20, Vietnam Veterans of America. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Chapter 20 or the Vietnam Veterans of America, its officers, board of directors or the general membership. No subscription fee is charged for this publication, and inclusion on the mailing list is available on request. Between the Lines can also be viewed on the Chapter 20 website at www.vva20.org.

We welcome letters to the editor, poetry, original articles and suggestions. Submissions should include name and phone number and can be sent to Between the Lines, P.O. Box 12580, Rochester, NY 14612 or emailed to kathy14470@msn.com. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity and to not use materials we think inappropriate for the publication. Deadline for submissions for each issue is the 5th of the preceding month. Exceptions may be granted by contacting the editor.

Between the Lines runs paid advertisements to help defray the costs associated with publication and as a convenience to our readers. Chapter 20 does not endorse any advertiser or guarantee satisfaction with goods or services provided.

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**Could someone you know be in crisis?**

The VA’s National Suicide Crisis Line

1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-273-8255

24/7 365 days/per year

Provides professional counseling to veterans, their family members or friends.

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**September 09**

**8 Tue**
- Board of Directors, 7:00pm (Changed due to Labor Day)

**10 Thu**
- Membership Meeting

**12 Sat**
- 7:30pm - Candlelight Vigil, Vietnam Memorial – Highland Park

**26 Sat**
- VFW Post 8495 Golf Tournament
  (benefit for The Wall That Heals)

**27 Sun**
- Gold Star Mothers Day

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**NYS Division of Veterans’ Affairs Launches New Website**

In an effort to improve its electronic reach to veterans and their families, the New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs launched a new version of its website. The new address is: http://www.veterans.ny.gov.

Please bookmark the new, simplified web address to receive the latest information on veteran’s benefits, services and programs for New York State’s veterans and their families.

Much of the new content is based on feedback from users of the site (available through Google Analytics) and oriented on better information surrounding veteran’s education benefits and employment issues.

The new site features not only great information about the Post 9/11 GI Bill, but a veterans’ education benefits calculator for New York State to help veterans decide where their benefit goes the farthest in New York. Check it out at: http://www.veterans.ny.gov/education.html.

On the employment side, the new site directs users to the New York Department of Labor’s Resource Center site for veterans, where they receive Priority of Service in recognition for their service. Check it out at: http://www.labor.state.ny.us/VETs/VETINTROPAGE.shtm.

Aside from a few ‘tweaks’ to still be made, the Division’s new site is available for all to use. Individuals using the old site address will be re-directed to the new site after about 10 seconds.

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